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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOSCO 185//

TO GENERAL SCOWCROFT/VAIL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SENSITIVE WH61134

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

TOSCO 185

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED  
ITEM NO: 4 DATE: AUGUST 21, 1976

SUBJECT: AEGEAN SITUATION

REF : PRESS

ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, AN OFFICIAL OF THE TURKISH MINING RESEARCH INSTITUTE SAID ON 20 AUGUST THAT TURKEY COULD START TEST DRILLING FOR OIL IN THE AEGEAN IN LITTLE MORE THAN A MONTH. DRILLING WOULD BE BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE CURRENT EXPLORATION OF THE RESEARCH SHIP SISMİK I. THE OFFICIAL WENT ON TO SAY THAT A SHIP NOW DRILLING IN THE BLACK SEA FOR THE TURKISH PETROLEUM COMPANY WOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE AEGEAN.

NO DOUBT SENSITIVE TO THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THIS REVELATION ON GREEK-TURKISH TENSIONS, TURKISH PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL ON THE SAME DAY NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER TO GO AHEAD WITH SUCH DRILLING. DEMIREL DID NOT, HOWEVER, INDICATE IF THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO LIMIT ANY SUCH DRILLING TO TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS, LEAVING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF ATTEMPTS TO OPERATE IN DISPUTED WATERS. THUS EVEN WITH DEMIREL'S DISCLAIMER THE ANNOUNCEMENT FURTHER UNDERSCORES ANKARA'S CLAIM TO A LARGER SHARE OF POTENTIAL AEGEAN SEABED RESOURCES.

THE SHIP CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THE BLACK SEA IS BELIEVED TO BE A FOREIGN VESSEL UNDER CONTRACT TO THE TURKISH PETROLEUM COMPANY. INTERNATIONAL CONCERN OVER THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION IN THE AEGEAN COULD PROBABLY BE EXPECTED TO CAUSE A FOREIGN COMPANY TO CONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY THE IMPLICATIONS OF ALLOWING ITS SHIP TO GET INVOLVED.

MEANWHILE, DEMIREL'S MID-WEEK STATEMENT THAT THE AEGEAN ISLANDS--REINFORCED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS AS A RESULT OF CHRONIC GREEK-TURKISH TENSIONS--CANNOT REMAIN ARMED CONTINUES TO STIR CONTROVERSY. GREEK PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, WHO HAS ALREADY TAKEN STRONG EXCEPTION TO THE STATEMENT, REPORTEDLY ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION FROM ANKARA. IN REPLY, ACCORDING TO THE GREEK PRESS, THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTRY ATTEMPTED TO PLAY DOWN THE ARGUMENT BY STATING THAT DEMIREL HAD NOT MEANT TO CHALLENGE GREEK SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLANDS IN QUESTION. E-2 IMPDET.

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